Director's Matters

By H. Frederick Dylla, Executive Director & CEO

Last Friday afternoon, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) released a memorandum to federal agencies on increasing access to the results of federally funded scientific research. The memo directs agencies that invest in R&D to develop a plan (within 6 months) for implementing increased public access to journal articles resulting from public funding. NSF issued an announcement in response, stating that NSF, DOE, USDA, NASA and NIST will comply; details of implementation are yet to be determined. The Association of American Publishers has also declared its support of the policy.

This development will influence the US scholarly publishing industry. In next week’s issue, I will provide an analysis when I and my colleagues in the STM publishing community have studied the OSTP guidelines in detail.

Finch on the Finch Commission

When Dame Janet Finch, an emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Manchester, was asked by the British government to chair a panel in 2011 to make recommendations on public access to scholarly publications, she had no idea that her name would henceforth be attached to a major diplomatic process among the stakeholders of scholarly publishing. As we approach the anniversary of the release of the report and the acceptance of its recommendations by the UK government last June, the subsequent actions and reactions in the UK and within the international community are having significant effects on this seemingly endless and often contentious debate.

I had the good fortune of meeting Dame Janet during a quiet dinner meeting given in her honor by the organizers of last month’s Academic Publishing in Europe 2013 conference, held in Berlin, Germany. This conference has been held for the last eight years, and it has always attracted a vocal mixture of parties interested in scholarly publications: publishers, librarians, researchers, government officials charged
Dame Janet opened the conference with a summary of her experience chairing the commission, which now carries her name.”I feel that one of the most important results of the commission was the success of its process. The commission was modeled after the US effort in 2009 with the Scholarly Publishing Roundtable, empaneled by the US House Science and Technology Committee. However, there were important differences with the Finch Commission, which strengthen both its work plan and subsequent influence. The commission makeup included representatives from all of the key stakeholders across the UK: publishers, librarians, university administrators, and funding agencies. (The Roundtable did not include funding agency representatives.) And secondly, the commission’s recommendations were accepted rapidly by the UK government, and the process moved quickly to the difficult details of implementation.”

In describing her experience with the commission, Dame Janet offered some key observations. She came to the appointment with no previous familiarity with the debate, as a truly neutral party. She was genuinely surprised by the participants’ passion but clearly was able to direct this passion toward useful ends. A reminder for those not following this debate—the commission’s remit (like the Roundtable’s) was to make recommendations about how journal articles that resulted from publicly funded research could be made available for free at some reasonable time after publication without compromising the essential value that publishers bring to scholarship. The commission sought to find a means of preserving peer review while strengthening the UK’s research enterprise and not causing harm to the business of scholarly publishing. Publishing is a very important business in the UK, home to a number of large commercial and nonprofit publishers that do business around the world.

The commission’s full report and its acceptance by the UK government have been widely publicized. I addressed the topic when the report first came out in June of 2012. (See my AIP Matters column of June 25.) The main recommendations were that there would be a mixed business model for scholarly publications for the near term (i.e., from the traditional subscription model to the so-called gold open-access model whereby the author pays upfront for publication), that the value added by publishers needs to be preserved by a sustainable business model, and that the pump should be primed to move the system more quickly to the gold open-access model. The commission also estimated the transition costs.

Dame Janet noted that each stakeholder group came to the commission with different interests and perspectives. For example, the funding agencies need transparency on their expenditure of public funds, publishers need payment to support their business, and researchers require both online access and the quality standards of the independent peer review process.

Since the commission’s report was published, some initial funding has been allocated to the UK university system to develop a system for paying author processing charges for open-access publications. Discourse over the implementation of the recommendations continues among the UK funding councils and universities. Regardless of how the implementation or adaption plays out, the Finch Commission will continue to influence policy throughout the rest of the world.

In the US, although federal funding agencies have always allowed research funds to be used for publication costs, given budget constraints, researchers much prefer to dedicate their funding to research and to have subscriptions pay the costs of publication. The focus to expand access has been
on modifying the subscription model and making articles freely accessible after an embargo period. Many publishers already use embargoed release but prefer to control the embargo period according to the type and market for the journal rather than be forced to comply with a government-mandated period. Like several of my colleagues in scholarly publishing, I am a proponent of multiple solutions to promote public access to reflect the economic diversity of the business.

Dame Janet’s talk showed the audience that she was convinced that the commission’s process was valuable; she has spent considerable time promoting its value to stakeholders in the UK and interested parties within the European Commission who will be making their own recommendations on public access for the upcoming 7-year funding plan for EC-funded research. At the one-year anniversary of the Finch Report’s release, Dame Janet will chair a meeting of the commission to assess the implementation process.

Last Thursday, February 22, the UK Parliament’s House of Lords Science and Technology committee published its report, “The Implementation of Open Access,” and continues the conversation on concerns about appropriate embargo lengths.

From AIP Publishing

PSP addresses the future of scholarly publishing

AIP and AIP Publishing staff attended the 2013 Professional/Scholarly Publishing (PSP) Annual Conference from February 6–8 in Washington, DC. PSP is a division of the Association of American Publishers. Industry leaders spoke on a variety of STM topics around the theme, “The (R)evolution of Value: Building Collaboration, Innovation, and Sustainability.”

Dylla joined Madeleine Jacobs, CEO of the American Chemical Society, and James Prendergast, executive director of IEEE, to lead a panel discussion on the future value of professional associations, positioning your organization for growth, and evolving your publishing services to meet the needs of a rapidly changing industry. Dylla discussed AIP’s formation of AIP Publishing LLC to enable its publishing mission to grow, develop, and better serve its customers. Read more about this session on the APLSP blog.

Another particularly relevant session was “The Value Proposition of Commercial Publishing: Where will your business be in 2018?” The engaging speakers emphasized the importance of understanding the daily workflow of your customer and to be constantly looking at ways to provide additional value and services that will generate additional revenue. Conference attendees also learned about the evolution of copyright and the latest in publishing technology.

E-messaging and reaching your audience

Jennifer Chiacchiaro, marketing manager, attended the Direct Marketing Association’s Email Evolution Conference in Miami, FL. She learned about best practices with email content, design, deliverability, and how to better use email marketing in an increasingly mobile world.
Meet the 2012 SPS Outstanding Chapter Advisor

The 2012 Society of Physics Students (SPS) Outstanding Chapter Advisor Award goes to Ajay Narayanan from Green River Community College in Auburn, WA. This award is the highest recognition given to chapter advisors by SPS. It celebrates an individual who has made exceptional contributions toward promoting student leadership, developing and inspiring a broad spectrum of activities, and inspiring enthusiastic student participation.

Narayanan has been involved with SPS since his graduate school days. Green River Community College’s chapter advisor since 2003, he also served two terms as zone councilor on the SPS National Council.

Says Narayanan:

“When we restarted the dormant chapter in 2003, four students signed up as members. Since then our membership has grown steadily. Our chapter was selected Club of the Year by the college in 2012.

Our wonderful students have secured three Marsh W. White Outreach Awards, won a couple of SPS Leadership Scholarships as well as an internship, and served on the SPS National Council as associate zone councilors. The students have set up numerous outreach events for the campus community and local elementary schools. I am incredibly proud of all the students have done.”

Inside Science’s first exhibit a solid success

Inside Science held its first-ever exhibit in mid-February at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Boston. More than 120 people signed up for email alerts to receive Inside Science News Service stories and Inside Science TV videos. Many more students, teachers, librarians, scientists, science writers, government officials, parents, and their children came by to learn about Inside Science at the exhibit, which also included materials on other programs across the Physics Resources Center and AIP as a whole. The exhibit booth was a collaborative effort, with planning and organizational assistance from many divisions within AIP and AIP Publishing.

AAPM journal *Medical Physics* becomes a hybrid gold open-access journal
In the journal’s first issue of 2013, *Medical Physics* Editor William Hendee and Journal Management Committee Chair Sam Armato included an editorial announcing the adoption of a hybrid open-access model. Authors now have the option of paying an up-front “article processing charge” to make their article free to the public on the journal’s website as soon as it is published.

Many journals are working to increase public access. The movement is especially strong in medical fields. *Medical Physics* is an AAPM journal serviced by AIP Publishing LLC. For more information, read the full editorial.

### Coming Up

**Thursday, February 28**

- AIP Development Board meeting (College Park)

**March 1–2**

- PRC Advisory Committee meetings (College Park)
- PRC Policy Committee meeting (College Park)

**March 18–22**

- APS March Meeting (Baltimore, MD)